

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Prof. Ngugi wa Thiongo

Prof. Ngugi wa Thiongo (Ph.D.) is a Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature, English (African and Caribbean Literature, theatre and film, performance studies, cultural and political theory at the University of California, Irvine. The legendary post-colonial African writer is also a literary and social activist. He writes plays, novels, short stories, and critical essays. His writings also deal with the cultural and political legacy of colonialism in contemporary Africa. He was educated at Kamandura, Mangu and Kinyogori Primary Schools; Alliance High School, all in Kenya; Makerere University College (then a campus of London University), Kampala, Uganda; and the University of Leeds. Prof Ngūgī wa Thiong’o is also an Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, 2003 and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2014.



Prof. Thomas K. Cheruiyot

Prof. Thomas K. Cheruiyot (Ph.D.) is the Vice Chancellor of the University of Eldoret. He is a Professor of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainability, and Strategy. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Strategic Management (Moi University); Master of Management Sciences (Wageningen University-Netherlands), and Bachelor in Agribusiness Management (Egerton University-Kenya).



Prof. Godfrey Netondo

Prof. Godfrey W. Netondo (Ph.D.) is the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and Student Affairs), University of Eldoret. He holds a Doctorate Degree in Plant Physiology and Biochemistry (Maseno University), Master of Science in Botany and Bachelor of Science in Botany and Zoology from the University of Nairobi. Prof. Netondo is a member of Kenya National Academy of Sciences and Kenya DAAD Scholars Association (KDSA). His research interests include environmental plant stress physiology, agrobiodiversity conservation and ecosystem services nexus. He has supervised 15 Master's and 6 Ph.D. students to completion. He has served as examiner of more than twenty theses and as an external examiner for various universities in Kenya, for both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework.



Prof. Phillip Raburu

Prof. Phillip Raburu (PhD) is an Associate Professor of Aquatic Resources and Environmental Management. He holds a Doctorate Degree in Environmental Studies from Moi University, Master of Science in Hydrology, and Bachelor of Science in Botany and Zoology from the University of Nairobi. Prof. Raburu has experience in extension, having worked with the local communities and civil society in the last 20 years. He is the founding Director of a national NGO, Victoria Institute for Research on Environment and Development (VIRED) International. He served as the National Chair of the Kenya Nile Basin Discourse Forum (KNDF) for 5 years and the Regional Vice Chair of the Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) covering the 10 Nile Basin Countries. He was also the Regional Chair of the Human Resource Development Working Group during the 1st phase of the Fisheries Management Plan for Lake Victoria. Nationally, Prof. Raburu has immensely contributed to the development and revision of national policies and regulations in the state ministries concerned with Fisheries, Natural Resources, and the Environment.

Prof. Godfrey W. Netondo



**Dr. Khanyisile Litchfield
Tshabalala**

Dr. Khanyisile Litchfield Tshabalala (Ph.D.) is the African Parliamentary Network on Illicit Financial Flows (APNIFFT) Continental Chairperson. A retired Rear Admiral Junior Grade, she stands out as a multifaceted professional encompassing roles such as facilitator, trainer, public speaker, writer, and consultant. Her expertise spans illicit financial flows and tax, with a keen focus on international finance institutions' transparency, accountability, and community engagement. It extends to other areas, including public debt and the development of finance institutions' transparency and accountability, feminism (which she has defined for herself in her first book as Afro-gender), decoloniality, African Spirituality and culture, precolonial African history, as well as activism for social and economic justice. Dr. Litchfield-Tshabalala's unique dedication to Africa, often prioritizing it above personal interests, is well-known among her peers and those who have worked with her. Her illustrious career began as a veteran of uMkhonto WeSizwe and an exiled freedom fighter, culminating in her historic achievement as the first female admiral in the South African Navy. Following her naval career, she continued to serve in the public service in various roles as the Gender Focal Point for the Gauteng Provincial Department of Infrastructure and Development, as the Project Manager of the National Youth Service under the Department of Defence, and as a Member of Parliament under the Economic Freedom Fighters. Through 16 years of public service, she specialized in human resources, gender mainstreaming, equal opportunities, equity, and mentorship, as well as transformation and institutional, cultural dynamics and change.



Prof. Bruce Mutsavairo

Prof. Bruce Mutsavairo (PhD) is a Professor and Chair of Media, Politics, and the Global South in the Faculty of Humanities Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University. A co-editor of two Springer International Publishing book series (link 1 & 2) and jointly published over 30 books focused mostly on the journalism, media, and communication research fields, (co)-authored or (co)-edited over 20 scholarly books and special-themed issues in high-impact journalism and media journals. His work investigates the impact of technological transformations in global journalism practices, particularly in non-democratic settings. A holder of three Master's degrees in International Business Management (VU Amsterdam), International Journalism (Cardiff University), and International Politics (University of Hull), he completed his Ph.D. at the Graduate School of Humanities at Leiden University in 2013. Completed his undergraduate degree, in 2004, at Utrecht University after spending a year studying the Russian language and culture at Voronezh State University in Russia. He initially studied broadcast journalism at Southern Institute of Technology in New Zealand, graduating in December 2020.



Prof. Miriam Kinyua

Prof. Miriam Kinyua (Ph.D.) is a Professor of Plant Breeding and Biotechnology in the School of Agriculture and Biotechnology at the University of Eldoret. With extensive experience in teaching and research, she is an enthusiast for the application of nuclear techniques in crop improvement. Professor Kinyua has received several awards, including the International Award for Women in Nuclear from the joint FAO/IAEA, a nomination to represent Africa in Women in Nuclear Science in Washington, USA, and the Presidential Award of the Order of Grand Warrior (OGW) for her outstanding contributions to agricultural production through research. Before joining the University of Eldoret, Prof Kinyua was involved in research at KARI (now KALRO) where she developed and released over 10 varieties. Prof. Miriam G. Kinyua has been conducting very successful research projects towards production of novel varieties of cash and food crops in Kenya.



Prof. Jackson Too (Ph.D.)

Prof. Jackson Too is a distinguished academic leader currently serving as the Deputy Director for Research and Innovation at the Commission for University Education (CUE). Prof. Too brings a wealth of experience and expertise in the field of Educational Communication and Technology, coupled with a remarkable track record in teaching, research, and administration at Moi University.

As an Associate Professor in Educational Communication and Technology at Moi University, Prof. Jackson Too has carved a niche in curriculum development, instructional media, pedagogy, and technology. His dedication to advancing these fields has not only enriched the academic environment at Moi University but has also positioned him as a thought leader in the broader educational landscape. Prof. Too is an active member of the Commonwealth Association of Educational Administration and Management (CAEAM), contributing to international dialogues and collaborations in educational administration. His role as an Advisory Member of the East and Southern African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA) further underlines his commitment to global educational advancements and cross-cultural collaboration. At the forefront of innovation, Prof. Jackson Too serves as the Project Leader for the Partnership for Enhanced Blended Learning (PEBL), a groundbreaking initiative under the DFID global Strategic Partnership in Higher Education Innovation & Reforms (SPHEIR). This project underscores his dedication to spearheading transformative approaches to teaching and learning in higher education. Having held key administrative positions, including Head of Research and Development and Deputy Commission Secretary in Administration and Finance at the Commission for University Education (CUE), Prof. Too has played a significant role in shaping policies and strategies in higher education at the national level. His administrative leadership has contributed significantly to the Commission's mission of ensuring quality education in Kenya. He has also been a driving force in supporting initiatives aimed at promoting the publication of scholarly papers among university faculty. His efforts align with the broader objective of

disseminating research findings globally, contributing to the advancement of academic knowledge and fostering intellectual exchange.

As a Member of the Task Force on Enhancing Access, Relevance, Transition, Equity, and Quality for Effective Curriculum Reforms, Prof. Jackson Too plays a key role in shaping the future of education in Kenya. His contributions to curriculum development and reform align with national objectives to ensure a robust, inclusive, and high-quality education system. Prof. Too extends his influence beyond national borders, serving as a member of the Independent Advisory Board (IAB) for PEBL in West Africa (WA). Additionally, his membership in the African Higher Education in Emergencies Network (AHEEN) Advisory Board reflects his commitment to addressing educational challenges on a continental scale.



Odilia Anyachi Okonga

Odilia Anyachi Okonga (B.Sc.) Odilia is a passionate advocate for educational reform in Africa. She passionately believes that education is the most powerful catalyst for change on the continent. She is a resolute proponent of an African-centered curriculum and is committed to amplifying African voices and images within educational contexts. Odilia's leadership and initiative are evident in her role as the founder of the International African School (IAS) (<https://internationalafrican.school/>), an Online School that teaches Swahili as a second language and Social Studies with a focus on African History, Civics, culture, and literature. Odilia's scholarly contributions to African education are significant. As a published author of Swahili grammar books in English, French, Dutch, and German, she has made substantial contributions to the documentation and advancement of resources for integrating African perspectives into the classroom. Based in the Netherlands, Odilia is a freelance teacher. She introduces the Discovering Africa Program in primary and secondary school classrooms. Through the art of storytelling, she skillfully utilizes African folktales to impart invaluable lessons in civics and history. Odilia has significantly promoted African culture and knowledge through various impactful initiatives in The Netherlands. She was honored to present the African concept of Ubuntu philosophy to over two thousand individuals in 2023. Furthermore, in 2023-24, Odilia curated an insightful African Textile exhibition at a prominent museum in The Netherlands titled "Discovering Africa Through Textile," highlighting African textiles' rich and diverse heritage. Her commitment to promoting African culture is further evidenced by her publication of Sauti ya Afrika Magazine, which focuses on curating African culture and narratives. Before her current endeavors, Odilia also contributed her expertise to a UN organization for more than 10 years, furthering her impact on a global scale. Her multifaceted contributions continue to make a positive and lasting impact on promoting and celebrating African culture and education. She is one of the founders of KEMET Awards for Achievement in African Languages (KAAAL Awards), an initiative that recognizes, archives, and

honors the achievements and development of African mother tongues.

Prof. Auma Okwany (Ph.D.) is an Associate Professor of Social Policy at The International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Netherlands. Her scholarship centers on the relationship between policy, practice, and theory for children, youth, and their families in diverse areas including a gendered analysis of education, social protection, (adolescent/youth) sexuality and reproductive health and rights, Relational Learning and Place-based Pedagogies. Her scholarship building privileges research that is attentive to epistemic diversity, highlighting the need to center and amplify voice and experiences which are often marginalized by the dominant narrative. In this endeavor of pursuing epistemic justice, she has built alliances with scholars in the African region in nurturing and mentoring emerging researchers on situated approaches. Her research outputs include articles, book chapters, and edited volumes including a book that she is currently editing for publication by Routledge. Using her scholarship to improve policy and practice, she has been involved in coordinating several externally funded multi-year, multi-partner research, development, and capacity building projects in East, South and West Africa.



Prof. Auma Okwany

Dr. Njeri Rahab (PhD) is a mother, historian, decolonial scholar, and community activist. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Trier through the International Excellent Graduate School IRTG (funded by DFG), following her studies at the University of Cologne. Her research interests include Postcolonial and Gender Studies, Intersectionality, Black Feminism, African History, Critical Whiteness Studies, Black Diaspora, Migration Studies, and Black Canadian Studies. As a trainer, Njeri specializes in Critical Whiteness, Anti-Black Racism, Critical Intersectional Diversity, and Empowerment. In her roles as moderator, curator, and trainer, she applies a decolonial lens to the complexities of race, gender, and power, creating inclusive and transformative spaces for dialogue and action. Njeri is actively engaged in the restitution debate in her city, advocating for the return of cultural heritage looted during colonialism. She serves on the board of several organizations, including the Health Committee of the City of Cologne, Postkoloniales Erbe Köln (Postcolonial Heritage of Cologne), ANSA e.V. (DAAD), International African School, and Women of Impact. She is one of the founders of the African Institute of Professional & Development Studies (AIPDS) and currently, also working to institutionalize Black Studies within German academia. Deeply involved in grassroots climate movements, Njeri brings a decolonial perspective to climate change activism. She is a strong advocate for the inclusion and visibility of Black women in climate policy discussions and has delivered several presentations on the contributions of Professor Wangari Maathai and Indigenous knowledge systems to current climate politics in Germany, promoting sustainable solutions rooted in equity and justice. In 2020, she ran for a political seat as a direct candidate for City Hall, representing the environmental political group Klima Freunde. An advocate of the Utu philosophy as articulated by Prof. Micere Githae Mugo, Njeri advocates for



Dr. Njeri Rahab

social justice, equity, empowerment and critical diversity in German higher education policy and strategy. She employs an Utu-centred decolonial framework to address issues of racism, coloniality, and exclusion, striving to dismantle oppressive structures across academia, society, and politics while fostering solidarity and critical allyship. Njeri is the founder of the KEMET Awards for Achievement in African Languages (KAAAL Awards), an initiative that recognizes, archives, and honours achievements in African languages both in the diaspora and on the continent. Under the patronage of renowned intellectual Prof. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, KAAAL foregrounds the significance of African languages as critical tools for decolonizing knowledge production, preserving cultural heritage, and empowering communities in the diaspora. For her work in decolonial activism, climate justice, and African language advocacy, Njeri was recognized as Historian of the Year 2023. Currently, Njeri works as a consultant for the University of Cologne (UoC), where she develops and advocates for antiracist policies and strategies. This is the first position of its kind in the history of German universities. Her work focuses on creating sustainable structures to ensure the University of Cologne becomes more inclusive for all, while also providing counsel to employees experiencing racial discrimination and supporting the development and implementation of anti-racist strategies across the institution.



**Dr. Elizabeth (Eliza)
Ngutuku**

Dr. Elizabeth (Eliza) Ngutuku (Ph.D.) is a research fellow at the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA) in the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is also a researcher at the Institute of Education, University College London. Eliza holds a Ph.D. in Development Studies from the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her Ph.D. research explored children's complex lived experience of poverty and vulnerability in Kenya. Eliza is a scholar-activist working on interdisciplinary issues on children and youth development in Europe, Africa and Asia. Her research practice involves critical inter-disciplinary research on voice and lived experience of children, Poverty, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender and Conflict, Education and constructions of young people's needs in policies and practice. As a decolonial scholar she also teaches on decolonial and gender sensitive education policies. Eliza is widely published including articles in Childhood and Ethnography and Education journals. Her latest publication is her book 'Children's Lived Experience of Poverty and Vulnerability in Kenya' just published with Routledge in 2025.



**Dr. Otieno Ong'ayo
(Antony)**

Otieno Ong'ayo (Antony) (PhD) is a political scientist by training. He is a Researcher Fellow at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University. He is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Eldoret in Kenya. He is also a Research Associate at the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in The Hague, where his research focuses on Governance of migration, diaspora engagement policies, migration, and development. He is an associate researcher with Globalization, Accessibility, Innovation and Care (GAIC) at the Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences (TSHD) Tilburg University, and for the last 8 years, he has been a member of the Commission on Development Cooperation (COS) of the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs (AIV) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr Ong'ayo has been lecturer in Globalization Studies and Humanitarian Action, Development Studies, Advanced master's in development studies, African Dynamics, Migration and Development, and international relations at several universities in the Netherlands (Leiden-Delft-Erasmus African dynamics programme, University of Groningen, University College Amsterdam, Tilburg University, University College Utrecht, and Webster University Leiden Campus). His research experience includes the implementation of several large-scale projects with grants from the EU - EU FP7-SSH-2007 on Diasporas for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings in collaboration with knowledge institutes (PRIO-Norway, BICC - Germany, CeSPI-Italy, UK, and Finland), McArthur Foundation Migrant Grant for Building Institutional cooperation between African Diaspora organizations and Governments in their countries of origin with a focus on Ghanaians and Nigerians in Germany, UK, and United States; Maximizing the value of the Kenyan diaspora funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most recently, Dr. Ong'ayo has been implementing projects on Transnational Diaspora Engagement: Refugee Settlements in Northern Uganda in collaboration with Cordaid and participated in NUFFIC-funded research on strengthening the capacity of educational institutions in Benin and Strengthening Training and Education Partnerships on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence for the Justice, Law, and Order Sector (STEPS for JLOS) in Uganda. His areas of specialization include Political Theory: Political Thought, Comparative Politics, Intersectional Theory International Relations: International Relations Theories, International Organisations, International Non-Governmental Organisations, Human Rights, Transnational Theory, International Development Corporation, Humanitarian Action Development Studies: Development Theories, Governance, Civil Society-State Relations, Political Economy, Globalization, Migration and Development, Digital Technology and Society, Global Health. Research methodology: Philosophy of Science, Qualitative Research; Discourse Analysis, Transformative Methodologies Programme management: Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, Institutional Capacity Strengthening, Curriculum Development, Facilitation of Participatory and Policy processes, Cross-cultural training.

